5B. Neighborhood Character

5B.1 INTRODUCTION

Neighborhood character is an amalgam of various character-defining features of an area. This subchapter describes the analysis of effects of implementing the CBD Tolling Alternative on neighborhood character, relying on the result of the traffic, transit, pedestrians and bicyclists, economic considerations, parklands, historic and cultural resources, visual resources, air quality, and noise analyses prepared for this EA.

5B.2 METHODOLOGY

5B.2.1 Framework for Neighborhood Character Analysis

Neighborhood character is the mix of the various elements that give neighborhoods their distinct personality, context, and feeling. Neighborhood character consists of the attributes, including social and economic characteristics, and assets that make a neighborhood unique and that establish a sense of place for residents, workers, and visitors. Changes in travel patterns can affect neighborhood character by resulting in a notable change in vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic in an area or a related change in vehicle noise or air quality, if that change in turn affects a defining feature of the area's neighborhood character.

Neighborhood character is distinct from community cohesion, which is the degree to which groups of people with shared attributes or affinities—such as cultural, religious, artistic, or activity-based communities—form and maintain communities that are not limited to any location or neighborhood. Project effects on community cohesion are discussed in **Subchapter 5A, "Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion."**

5B.2.2 Study Areas

This subchapter considers whether the CBD Tolling Alternative would affect neighborhood character at a local level by introducing changes in travel behavior that could in turn affect defining features of neighborhood character. The analysis considers the potential effects that would occur in neighborhoods where BPM results indicate that Project-related changes in travel behavior would occur: the Manhattan CBD; at and close to 60th Street; near neighborhood streets where vehicular traffic would increase because of the Project; and at transit hubs where vehicular and/or pedestrian activity would increase because of the Project. The study areas for this assessment include the following:

- **Manhattan CBD Study Area** – This study area includes the portion of Manhattan inclusive of and south of 60th Street from the Hudson River to the East River.[1]

[1] For the purposes of the analysis in this subchapter, the Manhattan CBD study area includes the West Side Highway/ Route 9A and the FDR Drive because these roadways are within and form part of the neighborhood context of the Manhattan CBD. However, vehicles that travel exclusively on these roadways would not be subject to the Manhattan CBD toll.

- **60th Street Manhattan CBD Boundary Study Area** – 60th Street is the only segment of the Manhattan CBD boundary that is adjacent to neighborhoods outside the Manhattan CBD (elsewhere, the boundary is defined by the Hudson and East Rivers and New York Harbor). Because a new toll would be implemented between neighborhoods where no toll exists today, an analysis of potential effects on the neighborhood character of this area is merited. This study area includes the section of Manhattan between 55th and 65th Streets from the Hudson River to the East River, overlapping with a portion of the Manhattan CBD study area. This study area at the border of the Manhattan CBD is included for consideration of changes in travel behavior that could occur near the edge of the Manhattan CBD following implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative and their potential for localized effects on its neighborhood character.

  The study area is limited to five blocks on either side of the Manhattan CBD boundary because while changes in transportation activity near the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary could be spread out over a broader area, this analysis makes the conservative assumption that the changes would be more concentrated (and therefore more intense) in the five blocks on either side of 60th Street and could have the potential to adversely affect neighborhood character.

In addition to the two study areas described above, the following areas where changes in transportation activity would result from Project implementation were also considered. For the reasons explained below, there is no potential for Project implementation to adversely affect neighborhood character in these areas, and no further analysis of these study areas was warranted.

- **Neighborhood Streets and Highways Experiencing Increases in Traffic** – The CBD Tolling Alternative would result in an overall net reduction in auto journeys to and from the Manhattan CBD. Depending on the tolling scenario, certain local streets and highway segments are projected to experience increases in vehicle traffic from route diversions. (**Subchapter 4B, "Transportation: Highways and Local Intersections,"** identifies these local streets and highways.) The concern for neighborhood character on these neighborhood streets and highways is whether this increased vehicular traffic could substantively burden the roadways in a way that could affect defining features of neighborhood character.[2] As described in **Section 5B.4.3**, changes in neighborhood character in neighborhoods where local streets and highways would experience increased traffic are not anticipated; therefore, specific study areas were not defined for this analysis.

  Some neighborhoods near these neighborhood streets and highways have large concentrations of minority and/or low-income populations, collectively "environmental justice populations," who live in them. **Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice,"** describes these neighborhoods and evaluates the effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on the environmental justice populations who live there.
- **Transit Hubs** – With the CBD Tolling Alternative, certain public transportation hubs would experience an increase in transit ridership as more travelers to and from the Manhattan CBD elect to take public transportation rather than personal transportation or taxis/FHVs to avoid the toll. (**Subchapter 4C,**

[2] This analysis relies on the impact determinations in **Subchapter 4B, "Transportation: Highways and Local Intersections,"** to determine whether roadways have been substantively burdened.

"Transportation: Transit," identifies the transit hubs.) The concern for neighborhood character at these transportation hubs is whether this increased travel activity could substantively burden[3] the roadways, parking facilities, and pedestrian elements in the immediate area of the transit hubs in a way that could affect defining features of neighborhood character, or whether the larger numbers of travelers accessing the transit hubs could cause changes in market forces near the transit hubs that could lead to displacement of businesses or residents in a way that would affect defining features of neighborhood character. As described in **Section 5B.4.3**, changes in neighborhood character near transit hubs are not anticipated; therefore, specific study areas were not defined for this analysis.

5B.3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the existing neighborhood character of each study area.

5B.3.1 Manhattan CBD Study Area

For the assessment in this subchapter, the Manhattan CBD study area is defined as the area of Manhattan south and inclusive of 60th Street. This area includes a heterogeneous mix of neighborhoods and serves as the economic hub of the New York City region (**Figure 5B-1**). This section broadly describes the character of the Manhattan CBD organized into three geographic areas—Lower Manhattan, Canal Street to 14th Street, and Midtown Manhattan north of 14th Street—following a traditional division of the Manhattan CBD into broad groupings of neighborhoods based on similarities in neighborhood character.

The Manhattan CBD has census block groups that house minority and low-income (collectively, "environmental justice") populations. **Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice,"** evaluates the effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on environmental justice populations.

LOWER MANHATTAN

Lower Manhattan is the southern portion of the Manhattan CBD study area from the tip of Manhattan north to Canal Street. This area includes neighborhoods such as the Financial District, Battery Park City, Chinatown, Tribeca, and Civic Center, and falls within Manhattan Community District 1 and a portion of Community District 3.[4] The area's built form is characterized by narrow streets in configurations that are not the typical Manhattan grid (e.g., the original colonial-era street configuration in the Financial District) and a varied mix of building forms that include low-rise, mid- to late-19th century buildings; turn-of-the-century and Art Deco skyscrapers; and tall, modern, brick and metal-and-glass skyscrapers, especially in the World Trade Center complex and Battery Park City. Land uses in the area include predominantly commercial and civic/government uses in the southernmost portions of Lower Manhattan, giving way to a more mixed-use, lower-density character with more residential, retail, open space, and light industrial uses

[3] This analysis relies on the impact determinations in **Subchapter 4C, "Transportation: Transit," Subchapter 4D, "Transportation: Parking,"** and **Subchapter 4E, "Transportation: Pedestrians and Bicycles,"** to determine whether roadways, parking facilities, and pedestrian elements have been substantively burdened.

[4] New York City is divided into 59 community districts, a division of local governance. Each district is represented by a community board, a group of up to 50 unsalaried members selected by the area's elected officials. Community boards serve an advisory role to address land use and community concerns within their districts and as a liaison between the public and the local government.

in the northern portions of Lower Manhattan. The area of Lower Manhattan south of Chambers Street has experienced a notable increase in residential use in recent decades, including conversion of prior office space into residential apartments. The Two Bridges neighborhood contains several public housing projects comprising thousands of affordable apartments.

Figure 5B-1. View of the Manhattan CBD Looking North to Midtown Manhattan from One World Trade Center

Source: Allison L. C. de Cerreño, 2022.

Lower Manhattan includes neighborhoods with notable environmental justice populations—Two Bridges and the portions of the Chinatown and the Lower East Side neighborhoods below Canal Street. Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice," Section 17.5.2 provides more information on these neighborhoods.

Lower Manhattan contains the approaches and entrance ramps to four major river crossings: the Brooklyn Bridge, Manhattan Bridge, Holland Tunnel, and Hugh L. Carey Tunnel. Traffic is particularly heavy at the river crossing entrances and exits, and traffic is often congested due to the narrow streets and irregular street layout. Generally, pedestrian volumes are extremely heavy on weekdays (because of the area's worker population) and lighter on weekends. Several major transportation hubs are located in Lower Manhattan and provide service connections to and between the subway system, the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) system, and ferry services. These include the PATH World Trade Center terminal; Fulton

Center subway complex; and ferry terminals at Pier 11, Battery Park City, and Whitehall Street (Staten Island Ferry and Battery Maritime Building).

The defining features of neighborhood character for the Lower Manhattan portion of the Manhattan CBD study area include its wide mix of street configurations and building forms; its dominant patterns of commercial, civic/government, and residential uses; the presence of numerous large-scale transportation facilities linking the area to other parts of the city and region; high levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; and the high density of development and intensity of use that characterize its neighborhoods.

CANAL STREET TO 14TH STREET

From Canal Street to 14th Street, the overall character of the Manhattan CBD study area is low-rise (compared to Lower Manhattan and Midtown) and more mixed-use, with a greater concentration of residential uses. Neighborhoods in the area include the Lower East Side, East Village, West Village/Greenwich Village, Soho, Hudson Square, and Meatpacking District. The area falls within Manhattan Community District 2 and a portion of Community District 3. Land uses in this area include mid-rise and high-rise residential buildings, many with ground-floor retail; institutional uses such as museums, university buildings, public and private schools, and churches; and open spaces. Local retail is generally concentrated on the avenues and includes concentrations of restaurants, drinking establishments, coffee shops, grocery stores, and other service establishments such as laundromats. The blocks closest to the East River in the Lower East Side and East Village neighborhoods contain several public housing projects comprising thousands of affordable apartments. Compared to other areas of the Manhattan CBD, office space is less prevalent between Canal and 14th Streets, but there are areas of converted industrial lofts and factory spaces used for commercial purposes. The Williamsburg Bridge lands at Delancey Street in this area of Manhattan.

This part of Manhattan includes the East Village neighborhood and portions of the Chinatown and Lower East Side neighborhoods, which have notable concentrations of environmental justice populations. Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice," Section 17.5.2 provides additional information on these neighborhoods.

The defining features of neighborhood character for the Canal Street to 14th Street portion of the Manhattan CBD study area include its thoroughly mixed-use character, with a high concentration of residential uses, local retail, open spaces, and institutional uses; relatively lower building heights (compared to Lower Manhattan and Midtown); high levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; and a level of development and intensity of use that are lower than those of Lower Manhattan or Midtown—though still quite high compared to most parts of the region.

MIDTOWN MANHATTAN

North of 14th Street, the character of the Manhattan CBD study area transitions to the high-density commercial uses of Midtown. Neighborhoods in this area include Union Square, Chelsea, Midtown, Garment Center, Times Square, Hell's Kitchen/Clinton, Stuyvesant Town, Murray Hill, Kips Bay, and Sutton Place. Midtown Manhattan falls within Manhattan Community Districts 4, 5, and 6. Notably, given the predominantly north–south orientation of the subway system and arterial street network in this part of

Manhattan, the eastern and western sides of Midtown are notably distinct from each other in terms of neighborhood character.

Midtown Manhattan contains a dense mix of office and commercial uses, with notable concentrations of office use along Park and Sixth Avenues, near Penn Station New York, in Rockefeller Center, in Times Square, around Grand Central Terminal, and in the new Hudson Yards neighborhood (**Figure 5B-2**). Major transportation hubs—including Penn Station New York, Grand Central Terminal, the Lincoln Tunnel, the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Queens-Midtown Tunnel, the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, and the ferry terminals at East 34th Street and West 39th Street—serve Midtown, as do numerous subway lines and the PATH system.

Figure 5B-2. Morning Congestion and Traffic in Midtown Manhattan Looking South on Third Avenue (Summer 2022)

Source: MTA

Midtown Manhattan also includes substantial residential uses, generally located in the eastern and western portions of Midtown. For example, numerous high-rise apartment buildings line Second and First Avenues, while brownstones and tenement buildings are mainly on the side streets. Residential uses are also concentrated west of Sixth Avenue, particularly within the Hell's Kitchen/Clinton neighborhood, and south of West 34th Street. Several public housing complexes are spread throughout Midtown. Local retail tends to be concentrated along the avenues and consists of ground-floor restaurants, bars, and local goods and services.

In Midtown Manhattan, the Hell's Kitchen and Clinton neighborhoods have concentrations of environmental justice populations. **Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice," Section 17.5.2** provides additional information on these neighborhoods.

The defining features of neighborhood character for the Midtown portion of the Manhattan CBD study area include its dominant patterns of commercial and residential uses; the presence of numerous large-scale transportation facilities linking the area to other parts of the city and region; high levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; heavily visited tourist attractions such as Times Square and the Empire State Building; and the high density of development and intensity of use that characterize its neighborhoods.

SUMMARY

Taken together, the defining features of neighborhood character for the Manhattan CBD study area include the following:

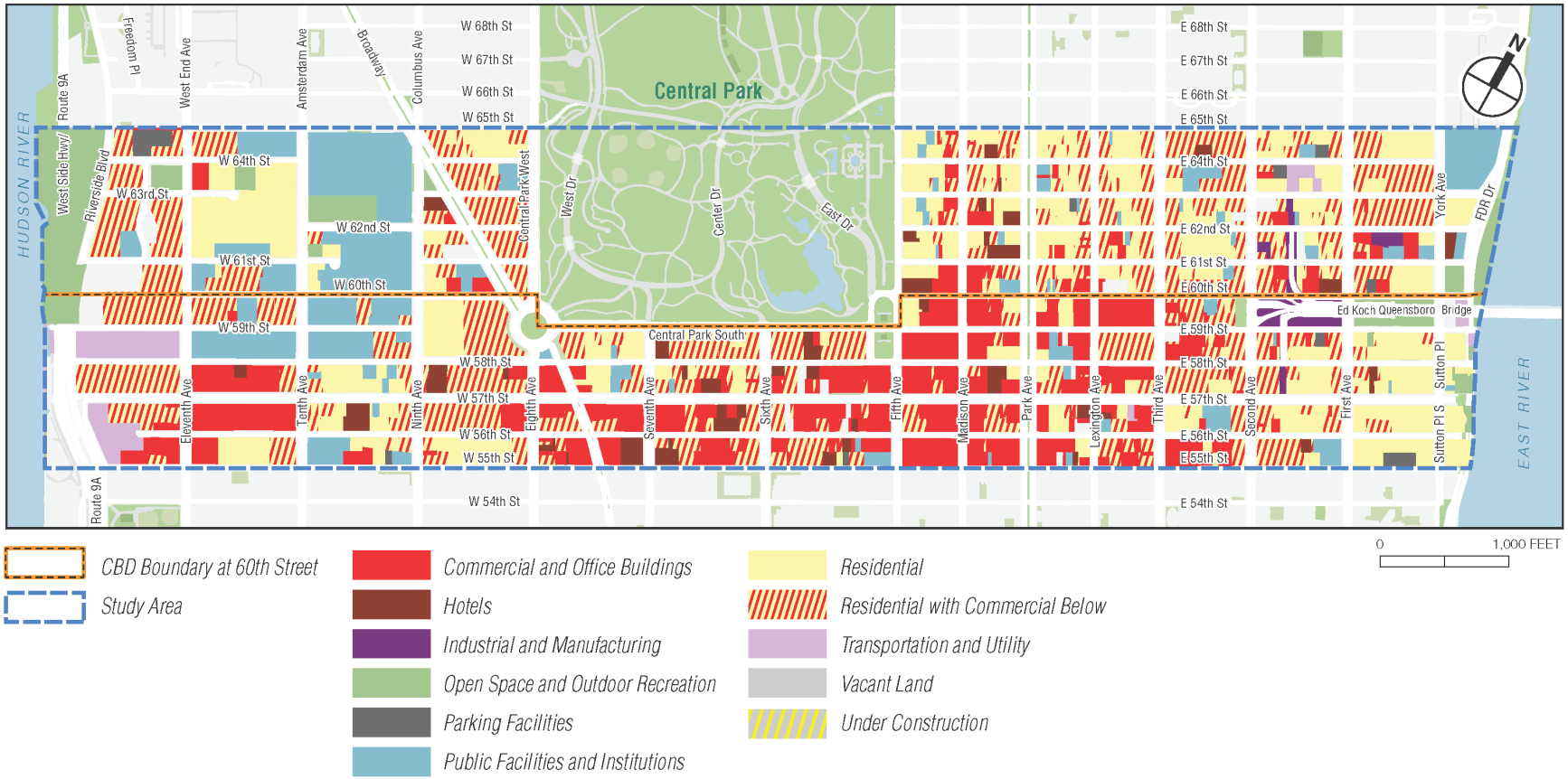
- Wide mix of street configurations (particularly in Lower Manhattan) and building forms, ranging from row houses to skyscrapers
- Established patterns of land use, with a heavy mix of uses across the Manhattan CBD and concentrations of different types of uses in certain neighborhoods
- The presence of numerous large-scale transportation facilities linking the Manhattan CBD study area to other parts of the city and region
- High levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Very high density of development and intensity of use (somewhat lesser between Canal and 14th Streets, and greater in Lower Manhattan and Midtown)

5B.3.2 60th Street Manhattan CBD Boundary Study Area

The 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area includes the area between 55th and 65th Streets from the Hudson River to the East River (Figure 5B-3), which encompasses the boundary of the Manhattan CBD at 60th Street and the blocks to the immediate south and north of the boundary. This area is densely developed with a wide mix of uses and long-established land use patterns. The area has heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic, with access to multiple subway and bus routes and high transit usage.

From 55th Street to 60th Street, the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area is part of the Manhattan CBD, and is a high-density district characterized by a mix of uses, including commercial and residential skyscrapers, retail districts, and large cultural and institutional facilities. The areas east of Second Avenue and west of Eighth Avenue are more residential in character, but still very densely developed with row houses and mid- and high-rise apartment buildings. Between 55th and 60th Streets, the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area is characterized by high pedestrian traffic throughout the day, and heavy vehicular traffic on all north–south roadways, along 57th Street and Central Park South, on the West Side Highway/Route 9A and the Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Drive, and near the entrances and exits to the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge.

Figure 5B-3. 60th Street Manhattan CBD Boundary Study Area (Manhattan from 55th Street to 65th Street)



Sources: New York City Department of City Planning, BYTES of the BIG APPLE, https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/data-maps/open-data.page.
ArcGIS Online, https://www.arcgis.com/index.html. January 2022.

[Note: For an audio description, please go to the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_apPTDwDX0&list=PLZHkn788ZQJPEY5zv-dr2gzkzMQFMgb_2&index=5.]

From 60th Street to 65th Street, the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area includes the densely developed east and west sides of Manhattan and the southern portion of Central Park. The east and west sides of Manhattan are high-density districts containing residential, commercial, cultural, and institutional uses. Residential uses include a mix of forms including row houses, mid- and high-rise apartment buildings, and residential skyscrapers. Neighborhood commercial corridors are along most north–south avenues. Streets in this area are characterized by heavy use due to the neighborhood's density and its proximity to the Manhattan CBD. There is heavy vehicular traffic on north–south avenues and on the east–west side streets in the eastern portion of the area, which provide access to the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge and the FDR Drive. At the northern edge of the area, 65th Street is more heavily trafficked, because it provides eastbound vehicular access across Central Park between the Upper West Side and Upper East Side neighborhoods via the 65th Street transverse. (66th Street, just outside the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, provides westbound access across Central Park and is also heavily trafficked). Pedestrian traffic is also heavy throughout the area, although less so on side streets.

While there are on-street, curbside parking spaces on most streets in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, on-street spaces are generally not a reliable source of parking and finding available parking spaces that are not already occupied can involve substantial time searching for an available space. Much of this parking is metered, and New York City on-street parking regulations are complex, with variable time-of-day and day-of-week regulations applying to any given space, which limits the reliable supply of available on-street parking spaces at any given time. For example, on-street parking throughout New York City, including in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, is subject to the city's alternate-side parking regulations, which require vehicles to be moved during the week to facilitate street cleaning. At other locations, parking is metered during certain hours with a limited length of stay, and drivers must renew the charge to park or get ticketed for violating parking regulations. At other locations, parking is restricted during peak commuter hours to provide additional moving lanes but is allowed during other times. Each of these regulations increases the complexity of finding a parking space that is reliably available for the entire duration during which an individual needs to park their car.

New York City policy does not protect or prioritize on-street parking in this section of Manhattan; in fact, the City of New York has implemented several policies and programs that promote repurposing on-street parking spaces for other uses, which has reduced the number of on-street parking spaces over time. These include the NYCDOT's bike-share program, which places bike-share docking stations in former on-street parking spaces, and the Open Restaurants program, which allows restaurants and other food-service establishments to convert on-street parking spaces to customer seating. The small percentage of residents of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area who have vehicles (approximately 74 percent of 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area households do not have a vehicle[5]) either park their vehicles in curbside spaces despite these challenges or use private off-street garages, often paying monthly. Public rates for monthly parking spaces (as opposed to preferential rates for residents of the building where the garage is located) range from approximately $400 per month to over $1,000 per month;[6] in general,

[5] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015–2019. Data are for the 21 census tracts that are closest to the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area (including Manhattan Census Tracts 106.01, 106.02, 108.01, 108.02, 108.03, 110, 112.01, 112.02, 112.03, 114.01, 114.02, 120, 122, 135.02, 137, 139, 145, 147, 149, 151.01, 151.02). In this area, 73.7 percent of households have no vehicles available; the margin of error is 2.0 percent.

[6] spothero.com.

higher pricing corresponds with greater proximity to major destinations, as well as added features such as valet service. Typically, given the low vehicle ownership rates in this area, the challenges in finding available parking spaces in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area and the dense, walkable nature of the area, as in the rest of Manhattan, most residents do not drive a vehicle for errands and shopping as they might outside the city. For example, modal split data prepared for the Greater East Midtown Rezoning (covering an area just south of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area that is comparable in terms of land use and transportation patterns) showed that 83 percent of trips to local retail destinations were walk trips, and 12 percent of local retail trips were made via public transportation (subway or bus); only 5 percent of these trips were made via automobile (2 percent by private auto, and 3 percent by taxi/FHV).[7]

The southern portion of Central Park is very different in character from the other areas of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, as it is part of a large (840-acre), landscaped city park. The section of Central Park within the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area is heavily used and has a variety of active and passive recreation areas. Other than the transverse roadways that cross the park, roadways in Central Park are closed to vehicular traffic other than authorized vehicles, and these roadways are heavily used by bicyclists, runners, and walkers, as well as recreational horse carriages. Throughout the southern part of Central Park, the tall buildings of the surrounding neighborhoods are visible and visually delimit the edges of the park. The park serves as an important public open space for residents, workers, and visitors from the adjacent neighborhoods. **Chapter 7, "Parks and Recreational Resources,"** provides more information about Central Park.

The defining features of neighborhood character for the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area include the following:

- Heavily mixed-use nature and established patterns of office, retail, residential, cultural, institutional, and open space uses
- High density of development
- High levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and transit use
- Highly walkable nature
- Contrast provided by the large open expanse of the southernmost portion of Central Park

5B.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

5B.4.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not implement a vehicular tolling program with its associated tolling infrastructure. New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC) socioeconomic and demographic forecasts and BPM modeling conducted for this Project show that between the 2023 build year and the 2045 future analysis year and in the absence of Project implementation, population would experience

[7] New York City Department of City Planning. May 2017. *Greater East Midtown Rezoning Final Environmental Impact Statement*, Chapter 12, "Transportation," Table 12.4 Transportation Planning Factors.

modest background growth, with corresponding increases in roadway traffic and transit ridership (see **Subchapter 4A, "Transportation: Regional Transportation Effects and Modeling,"** for further detail). The neighborhood character of the Manhattan CBD study area and the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area would be similar to existing conditions.

5B.4.2 CBD Tolling Alternative

This section describes the potential effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative (all tolling scenarios) on neighborhood character.[8] CEQR guidance for neighborhood character analyses notes that neighborhood character is an amalgam of various character-defining features, and when a defining feature of neighborhood character would be adversely affected, this would in turn adversely affect neighborhood character overall. Travel patterns help give neighborhoods their distinct personality, context, and feeling, and thus are a component of neighborhood character. This section presents potential beneficial and adverse effects on defining features of neighborhood character resulting from implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative.

MANHATTAN CBD STUDY AREA

As described in **Subchapter 4A, "Transportation: Regional Transportation Effects and Modeling,"** the CBD Tolling Alternative would reduce VMT in the Manhattan CBD study area, although VMT reductions would not be evenly spread across the Manhattan CBD, and certain roadways would experience increased VMT due to route diversions. Overall, reduced VMT in the Manhattan CBD would reduce associated pollutant emissions and improve travel times and travel-time reliability. Even in locations where traffic would increase, the Project would not adversely affect air quality (see **Chapter 10, "Air Quality"**) or noise (see **Chapter 12, "Noise"**). Therefore, there would be no potential for changes in air quality or noise to adversely affect defining features of neighborhood character. Beneficial Project effects to air quality and noise at the local scale would be limited and would not affect defining features of neighborhood character.

As described in **Section 5B.3.1**, the defining features of neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area include the following:

- Wide mix of street configurations (particularly in Lower Manhattan) and building forms, ranging from row houses to skyscrapers
- Established patterns of land use, with a heavy mix of uses across the Manhattan CBD and concentrations of different types of uses in certain neighborhoods
- The presence of numerous large-scale transportation facilities linking the Manhattan CBD study area to other parts of the city and region
- High levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Very high density of development and intensity of use (somewhat lesser between Canal and 14th Streets, and greater in Lower Manhattan and Midtown)

[8] See **Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives,"** for information on the tolling scenarios.

Potential concerns for neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area due to implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative relate to whether changes in the number of people accessing the Manhattan CBD and economic effects on specific industries would have the potential to affect defining features of neighborhood character.

Changes in the Number of People Accessing the Manhattan CBD

As described in **Subchapter 4A, "Transportation: Regional Transportation Effects and Modeling,"** BPM results indicate that despite congestion reductions resulting from the Project, due to people shifting to other modes the overall number of daily journeys by all modes to, from, and within the Manhattan CBD study area would not change substantially because of the Project. The BPM has a limited ability to predict trip cancellation, and it is likely that some additional trips to the Manhattan CBD beyond those projected by the BPM would be canceled due to the implementation of the Project. **Subchapter 4A** notes that experience from similar program implementations in London and Stockholm shows that while some trip cancellation would occur, it would be a relatively small percentage of overall drivers accessing the Manhattan CBD (less than 3 percent in London and up to approximately 11 percent in Stockholm). Because only approximately 20 percent of all Manhattan CBD-related journeys are made by auto, cancellation of a small percentage of auto trips would not result in a significant decrease in total journeys by all modes. For example, in 2023 under Tolling Scenario B (the scenario with the highest number of Daily Manhattan CBD-related vehicle person- journeys, per **Table 4A-9** in **Subchapter 4A, "Transportation: Regional Transportation Effects and Modeling"**), if 11 percent of those journeys were cancelled altogether, this would result in a decline of 50,329 total CBD-related journeys; if 3 percent of those journeys were cancelled altogether, this would result in a decline of 13,726 total CBD-related journeys. In the context of the approximately 2.8 million total daily journeys to the Manhattan CBD in 2023 (see **Table 5A-2** in **Subchapter 5A, "Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion,"**), this represents a small fraction of total journeys to the Manhattan CBD. With this small reduction in the overall number of people accessing the Manhattan CBD study area daily, the high levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, high density of development and intensity of use, and the prominence of large-scale transportation facilities that are defining characteristics of neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD would not be affected. Therefore, the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area due to changes in the number of people accessing the Manhattan CBD.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, with the Project, pedestrian traffic in this area would likely increase due to mode shift away from automobiles, which could benefit land uses that rely on high levels of pedestrian traffic, particularly retail uses. This would reinforce the established patterns of land use, heavy mixing of uses, and the very high density of development and intensity of use that are defining features of neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area.

Economic Effects on Specific Industries

As noted in **Chapter 18, "Agency Coordination and Public Outreach,"** members of the public raised Project effects on small businesses as a concern during early public outreach conducted in fall 2021. **Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions,"** concludes that changes in travel patterns brought on by the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect any particular industry or occupational category in the Manhattan CBD,

including small businesses. The analysis also indicates no adverse changes to commercial traffic providing goods and services to the Manhattan CBD.

Therefore, economic effects on specific industries resulting from the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect the established land use patterns and mixing of uses that are defining features of neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area.

As discussed above, with the Project, pedestrian traffic in this area would likely increase, which could benefit specific industries that rely on high levels of pedestrian traffic, particularly retail businesses. This would reinforce the established patterns of land use, heavy mixing of uses, and the very high density of development and intensity of use that are defining features of neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area.

60TH STREET MANHATTAN CBD BOUNDARY STUDY AREA

As described in Section 5B.3.2, the defining features of neighborhood character in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area include the following:

- Heavily mixed-use nature and established patterns of office, retail, residential, cultural, institutional, and open space uses
- High density of development
- High levels of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and transit use
- Highly walkable nature
- Contrast provided by the large open expanse of the southernmost portion of Central Park

Concerns for neighborhood character in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area because of implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative relate to whether changes in driving behavior, changes in access to parking, economic effects of changes in travel patterns, and effects on Central Park would have the potential to affect defining features of neighborhood character.

Changes in Driving Behavior and Access to Parking

As described in Subchapter 4A, "Transportation: Regional Transportation Effects and Modeling," BPM results for all tolling scenarios indicate that with the CBD Tolling Alternative, roadway traffic would generally decrease across the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area; however, traffic would increase on certain streets due to route diversions, particularly in the eastern portion of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area near the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. The volume of vehicular traffic on each of the avenues immediately north of 60th Street would decrease under all tolling scenarios. As noted in Chapter 18, "Agency Coordination and Public Outreach," members of the public raised concerns about high levels of congestion near cultural institutions in the Upper West Side portion of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area during early public outreach conducted in the fall of 2021; as this area is located immediately north of 60th Street, BPM results described above indicate that the Project would improve the traffic situation in this area. The drop in vehicular traffic along the avenues north of 60th Street

described above also suggests that the demand for parking in those neighborhoods would not increase. However, members of the public have expressed concern that after implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative, taxi/FHV drop-offs would increase just north of 60th Street and demand for the existing, limited supply of on-street parking north of 60th Street could increase, as people seek to avoid crossing the Manhattan CBD boundary in a vehicle and paying the toll. However, this is unlikely to occur given the difficulty in finding an available parking space in this area (see discussion in **Section 5B.3.2**). On-street parking is generally not a reliable source of parking in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area. To have a reliable source of parking, commuters and other drivers who routinely access the Manhattan CBD from the north would likely seek a monthly space in a parking lot or garage; as discussed in **Section 5B.3.2**, costs for monthly spaces in this area range from approximately $400 to over $1,000 per month, which would offset the benefit of avoiding the toll. If any increase in parking demand or taxi/FHV drop-offs does occur in this area, it would likely decrease over time as people adjust their travel patterns to account for the toll. Particularly for those driving their personal vehicles, the complexity and wasted time associated with finding parking in this area would likely deter long-term shifts to parking just north of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary. Any increase in demand for on-street parking would not affect most neighborhood residents, who are not likely to rely on on-street parking for their regular parking needs. It should be noted that ready access to on-street parking spaces is not a defining feature of neighborhood character in this area, and any limited changes to on-street parking availability that may occur as a result of Project implementation would therefore not have the potential to affect neighborhood character.

As described in **Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions," Section 6.4.3.2,** if an increase in demand for off-street parking were to occur just north of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary, that demand would be accommodated through available capacity, or if there were capacity constraints, it would be offset through upward adjustments in parking fees; this would likely offset potential changes in parking behavior resulting from the CBD Tolling Alternative. Between 60th and 65th Streets, there are 7,525 off-street parking spaces in 52 parking facilities, which under typical conditions are at 70 to 80 percent occupancy.[9] Of these, 3,865 spaces in 34 parking facilities are located east of Central Park, and 3,660 spaces in 18 parking facilities are located west of Central Park. For additional detail, see **Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions," Table 6-33**. It is unlikely that new off-street parking capacity would be added just north of 60th Street because the area is built-out and lacks available sites, and a decades-long trend toward lower parking demand combined with high real estate values in this area further suggest that new parking garages would not be developed.

With the CBD Tolling Alternative, neighborhood residents who live on one side of the Manhattan CBD boundary and park on the other, and who elect not to switch to a parking space on the same side of the Manhattan CBD boundary, would need to pay the toll each time they drive to their residence. This could add complexity to certain activities for those individual residents, such as dropping off purchases at a residence after a shopping trip. However, as noted, most residents do not have vehicles, and among those

[9] Based on a sampling of parking utilization collected in 2018 and 2019 during typical conditions for environmental review studies, weekday midday off-street parking utilization generally ranges from approximately 70 to 80 percent of capacity, with lower utilization rates in the AM and PM peak periods. Applying this utilization estimate to the total off-street parking capacity between 60th and 65th Streets (7,525 spaces) equates to between 1,505 and 2,258 available off-street parking spaces.

who do, most do not drive their vehicles in connection with shopping trips in this way. In addition, the New York City zoning code and CEQR guidance do not prioritize such activities in this section of Manhattan. New York City zoning does not require most developments in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area to include off-street parking, and CEQR guidance generally does not consider project parking shortfalls in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area to constitute an adverse impact due to the wide availability of transit and other alternative modes of transportation.

Any changes in driving behavior and access to parking would not adversely affect the defining features of neighborhood character in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area. Because new parking garages are not likely to be developed in the place of existing uses, there would be no change in the mixed-use nature, established land use patterns, and high development densities that are defining features of the area's neighborhood character. Any increase in demand for parking would not affect the defining features of neighborhood character in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, because ready access to parking is not a defining feature of neighborhood character in this area.

Economic Effects of Changes in Travel Patterns

While the reductions in roadway traffic with the CBD Tolling Alternative would reduce congestion in the neighborhood, the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area would continue to experience heavy vehicular traffic overall given its major activity centers and its connections to the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge, a major East River crossing. Pedestrian traffic would likely increase, which could benefit retail businesses in the neighborhood. Because the CBD Tolling Alternative would not substantially change the overall number of people using the neighborhood, it would not result in changes to the land use patterns that contribute to the character of the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area. Existing businesses in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area would not be adversely affected, except potentially for off-street parking garages, which are discussed in the next paragraph (see **Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions,"** for further discussion of existing businesses).

As described in **Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions,"** demand for off-street parking could decrease in the blocks south of 60th Street after implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative. This could lead to the redevelopment of existing parking garages with new replacement uses over time. The high property values in the neighborhood combined with existing zoning would ensure that replacement uses would be consistent with the types of uses already prevalent in the area, such as high-density commercial, residential, and institutional uses.

Therefore, the economic effects of changes in travel patterns would not adversely affect the mixed-use nature, prevailing land use patterns, high densities, and highly walkable nature that are defining features of neighborhood character in this area.

Pedestrian traffic would likely increase in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, which could benefit retail businesses in the neighborhood, reinforcing the established patterns of land use that are a defining feature of the area's neighborhood character. Any redevelopment of existing parking garages could also benefit neighborhood character by introducing more active uses and higher densities that are more aligned with the defining features of the area's neighborhood character.

Effects on Central Park

Central Park is closed to vehicular traffic except for park deliveries or other drivers with permitted business in the park; therefore, there would be no increase in the small number of vehicles that use the park roadways. The CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in any adverse effects on Central Park, such as changes in the use of the park or any reduction in usable parkland. The CBD Tolling Alternative (all tolling scenarios) would result in reduced traffic volumes adjacent to Central Park on Fifth Avenue and Central Park West as well as reduced traffic volumes crossing the park using the park's sunken transverse roads, which would be considered a beneficial effect on the park (see **Chapter 7, "Parks and Recreational Resources"**). Thus, the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect the character of Central Park, which is a defining feature of neighborhood character in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area, and would result in beneficial effects to the park.

NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS AND HIGHWAYS EXPERIENCING INCREASES IN TRAFFIC

Subchapter 4B, "Transportation: Highways and Local Intersections," provides analysis of highway segments and intersections in neighborhoods where changes in traffic would occur and concludes that with the implementation of standard traffic improvements, there would be no adverse traffic effects at local intersections. **Subchapter 4B** also concludes that through implementation of Transportation Demand Management measures, adverse traffic effects would be mitigated on highway segments where potentially adverse effects would result from increases in traffic volumes. As a result, with implementation of Transportation Demand Measures, there would be no substantial change to the overall operation or character of local streets or highways. Therefore, the CBD Tolling Alternative does not have the potential to alter neighborhood character near neighborhood streets or highways experiencing increases in traffic.

Many of the neighborhoods near these neighborhood streets and highways contain environmental justice populations. As noted in **Chapter 17, "Environmental Justice"** and **Chapter 18, "Agency Coordination and Public Outreach,"** during early public outreach conducted in the fall of 2021, members of the public raised concerns that traffic diversions to highways in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx with the CBD Tolling Alternative would adversely affect nearby neighborhoods with environmental justice populations, including by degrading air quality and increasing noise. Members of the public also voiced concerns about the effects of changes in traffic on the Lower East Side section of Lower Manhattan. **Section 17.6** provides a discussion of effects on environmental justice communities.

TRANSIT HUBS

As noted in **Section 5.B.2.2**, the concern for neighborhood character at transit hubs relates to whether increased travel activity resulting from the Project would substantively burden the roadways, parking facilities, and pedestrian elements in the immediate area of the transit hubs in a way that could affect defining features of neighborhood character, or whether the larger numbers of travelers accessing the transit hubs could cause changes in market forces near the transit hubs that could lead to displacement of businesses or residents in a way that would affect defining features of neighborhood character. **Subchapter 4C, "Transportation: Transit," Subchapter 4D, "Transportation: Parking,"** and **Subchapter 4E, "Transportation: Pedestrians and Bicycles,"** conclude that the CBD Tolling Alternative would increase ridership at many transit stations, but it would not result in adverse effects to the operations of transit

hubs. **Subchapter 5A, "Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion,"** concludes that the CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in adverse effects from indirect residential displacement near transit hubs. **Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions,"** concludes that the CBD Tolling Alternative does not have the potential to substantively alter market conditions in neighborhoods surrounding transportation hubs. Therefore, given that the Project would not result in any effects at transit hubs, the CBD Tolling Alternative does not have the potential to alter neighborhood character near transit hubs.

5B.5 CONCLUSION

Table 5B-1 summarizes the effects of the Project.

Table 5B-1. Summary of Effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on Neighborhood Character

SUMMARY OF EFFECTS	EFFECT FOR ALL TOLLING SCENARIOS	POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT	MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS
No notable change in neighborhood character, including in the Manhattan CBD, in the area close to the CBD boundary, and the rest of the 28-county area	The changes in traffic patterns on local streets are unlikely to change the defining elements of the neighborhood character of the Manhattan CBD.	No	**No mitigation needed.** No adverse effects
	Changes in parking demand near the 60th Street CBD boundary (including increases just north of 60th Street and decreases just to the south) would not create a climate of disinvestment that could lead to adverse effects on neighborhood character nor alter the defining elements of the neighborhood character of this area.	No	**No mitigation needed.** No adverse effects

The Manhattan CBD study area serves as the economic hub of the New York City region and includes a heterogeneous mix of neighborhoods. The CBD Tolling Alternative would decrease vehicular trips within most parts of the Manhattan CBD and increase transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trips near transit stations. Due to people shifting to other modes the Project-related changes in the number of people accessing the Manhattan CBD would not substantially change and would not noticeably affect the intensity of use of the Manhattan CBD study area. Changes in travel patterns brought on by the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect any particular industry in the Manhattan CBD. Pedestrian traffic in this area would likely increase due to mode shift away from automobiles, which would benefit land uses that rely on high levels of pedestrian traffic, particularly retail uses. This, in turn, would reinforce the established patterns of land use, heavy mixing of uses, and the very high density of development and intensity of use that are defining features of neighborhood character in the Manhattan CBD study area.

The 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area is a high-density mixed-use district containing portions of several neighborhoods as well as a section of Central Park. The CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in any adverse effects on Central Park, and traffic reductions on certain roadways adjacent to and within the park would result in beneficial effects to the park. This study area would be affected by changes in driving behavior related to access to parking; in addition, implementation of a congestion toll at 60th Street would add complexity for those neighborhood residents who currently drive in the area for errands and other activities. However, because new parking garages are not likely to be developed in the place of existing uses, there would be no change in the mixed-use nature, established land use patterns,

and high development densities that are defining features of the area. Any increased complexity in finding parking would not affect the defining features of neighborhood character because ready access to parking is not a defining feature of neighborhood character in this area. For these reasons, the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area.

The CBD Tolling Alternative would benefit neighborhood character in the 60th Street Manhattan CBD boundary study area. Pedestrian traffic would likely increase, which could benefit retail businesses in the neighborhood, reinforcing the established patterns of land use that are a defining feature of the area's neighborhood character. Any redevelopment of existing parking garages could also benefit neighborhood character by introducing more active uses and higher densities that are more aligned with the defining features of the area's neighborhood character.

Subchapter 4B, "Transportation: Highways and Local Intersections," concludes that with the implementation of standard traffic improvements, there would be no adverse traffic effects at local intersections. It also concludes that through implementation of Transportation Demand Measures, adverse traffic effects could be mitigated on highway segments where traffic volumes would increase. While the CBD Tolling Alternative would affect traffic operations on local streets and highways in neighborhoods near the Manhattan CBD, there would be no substantial change to the overall operation or character of these local streets or highways, including on emissions and noise (see Chapter 10, "Air Quality," and Chapter 12, "Noise"). Thus, there would be no potential for Project-related changes to local streets or highways to substantively alter the neighborhood character of the areas nearby.

Subchapter 4C, "Transportation: Transit," Subchapter 4D, "Transportation: Parking," and Subchapter 4E, "Transportation: Pedestrians and Bicycles," conclude that the CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in adverse effects to transportation conditions at transit hubs; Subchapter 5A, "Social Conditions: Population Characteristics and Community Cohesion," concludes that the CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in adverse effects from indirect residential displacement near transit hubs; and Chapter 6, "Economic Conditions," concludes that the CBD Tolling Alternative does not have the potential to substantively alter market conditions in neighborhoods surrounding transportation hubs. Therefore, there would be no potential for Project-related changes to transportation, social, or economic conditions at transit hubs to substantively alter defining features of neighborhood character near these transit hubs.